

**BEFORE THE  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
High-Cost Universal Service	)	WC Docket No. 05-
337		
	)	
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service	)	CC Docket No. 96-
45		

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE  
KANSAS CORPORATION COMMISSION  
ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE REFORM**

The Kansas Corporation Commission (Kansas Commission) hereby submits comments in response to the three Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs), released by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on January 29, 2008. In these NPRMs the FCC sought comments on (1) the Recommended Decision of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (Joint Board) regarding high-cost universal service support; (2) the FCC's rules governing the amount of high-cost support provided to competitive eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs); and (3) the merits of using reverse auctions to determine the amount of high-cost universal service support provided to ETCs.

Over the last several years, the federal Universal Service Fund (USF) has been under increasing pressure due to declining assessable revenues and the concurrent growth in high-cost support ported to competitive ETCs

coupled with the fact that incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) support is not reduced when it loses lines. The Kansas Commission believes that something should be done to control the size of the fund without impeding the advancement and preservation of universal service. The Kansas Commission applauds the Joint Board's effort in tackling this daunting task.

The Kansas Commission supports the Joint Board's proposal to add mobility and broadband to the list of supported services. Mobility and broadband services provide many economic and social benefits; thus, it is crucial that all areas, including rural and insular areas of the nation have access to such services. The Kansas Commission urges the Joint Board and the FCC to ensure that geographic areas are carefully screened to make certain such technologies are unavailable and that funding is truly needed in order to bring broadband and/or wireless services to the area. The FCC should not provide funding for such services in areas where companies are already induced by economic factors to provide such services without the receipt of additional funding.

Comprehensive long-term USF reform will require the coordination of the FCC and state commissions, and the development of national standards or guidelines to ensure consistency among the states. Among other things, guidelines will need to address new ETC eligibility criteria, survey protocols for establishing unserved or under served areas, and protocols for the disbursement of funds/grants. The Kansas Commission looks forward to

participating in the development of such standards or guidelines.

Furthermore, if state commissions will be responsible for identifying the unserved areas and the awarding funds/grants, then the FCC will need to delegate specific authority to the state commissions.

In order to be truly comprehensive in its reform, the Kansas Commission suggests the FCC review all aspects of high cost support, including support currently provided to both ILECs and CETCs. The Joint Board's recommendation focuses solely on reform of CETC support. However, the FCC should not attempt to preserve existing revenue levels for a particular carrier, technology or study area. High-cost support should be targeted for bringing service to high-cost areas in the most efficient manner.

Finally, the Kansas Commission suggests that regardless of the path the FCC takes in reforming the federal USF, in no way should Lifeline or Link-Up customers be negatively affected. Low-income program funding levels should neither be reduced nor shifted to support any of the other current or proposed funds.

Telecommunications

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Colleen R. Harrell  
Litigation

Counsel,

Kansas Bar No. 16121

Attorney for the Kansas  
Corporation Commission  
1500 SW Arrowhead Rd  
Topeka, KS 66604  
(785) 271-3137  
(785) 271-3167 (Fax)  
c.harrell@kcc.ks.gov